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SPEECH TO ERIE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

May 4, 1959

William J. Donovan and the National Security

It's a very great pleasure to be in Buffalo, and to be asked to address the Bar Association on Bill Donovan's Day.

It was my privilege to be associated with William J. Donovan on many different enterprises. We had a large number of similar interests, both being lawyers, interested in world affairs, and commissioned by the government on several occasions.

I am sure that you are all very familiar with the early career of this distinguished son of Buffalo's First Ward, who was born here on New Year's Day, 1883. He attended St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute *and Niagara University* and then went on to New York City where he received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Columbia in 1905 and his law degree in 1907. At Columbia Donovan was a star quarterback on the football team. He often commented on his football experience as having set a pattern for him of keeping in top physical condition.

a pattern which he liked in others, as evidenced by the number of crack football players and athletes that he brought into the Office of Strategic Services during World War II. In 1955 Columbia presented its athletic award to commemorate his days as one of its great quarterbacks, and in recognition of 50 years of devoted service as an alumni.

Admission to

After entering the bar, Bill Donovan returned here to practice law.

His interest in national defense matters started early, for in 1912 as the war clouds gathered in Europe, he helped organize Troop 1 of the New York National Guard. Shortly after this, in 1914, he married Ruth Ramsey, a Buffalo girl. In 1915 Bill was appointed to the American War Relief Commission but had to resign from that shortly thereafter to go with his troop to the Mexican Border.

Then came his famed career in World War I with the 165th Infantry of the 42nd Division--the renowned "Fighting 69th" of the Rainbow Division. This is purportedly where he received his nickname "Wild Bill". The story goes that after the regiment landed in France he ran them five miles

with full packs to limber them up. As the men were grumbling with exhaustion, Donovan pointed out that he was ten years older and carrying the same 50-pound pack. One of the men replied, "But we ain't as wild as you, Bill!"

The citations Colonel Donovan received in France tell the story:

On 28 July a Distinguished Service Cross. The citation reads, "He was in

advance of the division for four days, all the while under shell and machine-

gun fire from the enemy, who were on three sides of him, and he was

repeatedly and persistently counterattacked, being wounded twice." On

July 31 the citation for the Distinguished Service Medal reads: "He dis-

played conspicuous energy and most efficient leadership in the advance of

his battalion across the Ourcq River and the capture of strong enemy

positions... His devotion to duty, heroism, and pronounced qualities of a

Commander enabled him to successfully accomplish all missions assigned

to him in this important operation." And then on October 14 the greatest

of all, the ~~Cross~~ Medal of Honor for action at Landres and St. Georges

in the Meuse-Argonne. This citation reads, "... Colonel Donovan personally

led the assaulting wave in an attack upon a very strongly organized position, and when our troops were suffering heavy casualties he encouraged all near him by his example, moving among his men in exposed positions, reorganizing decimated platoons and accompanying them forward in attacks. When he was wounded in the leg by a machine-gun bullet, he refused to be evacuated and continued with his unit until it withdrew to a less exposed position.

General Douglas MacArthur who personally saw the action in which Donovan won the Medal of Honor said, "No man ever deserved it more." Reverend

Francis P. Duffy, the chaplain of the 69th, said, "His men would have cheerfully gone to hell with him, and as a priest, I mean what I say."

Three aides were killed at Donovan's side in the course of these actions--one being Joyce Kilmer--but "Wild Bill" fought on.

Shortly after Donovan returned from the war Niagara University awarded him an honorary law degree in 1919.

In 1922 he made his first effort to gain political office, running unsuccessfully for Lieutenant Governor. That same year Donovan was

appointed U. S. Attorney in Buffalo and entered a new phase of his career.

This was the period of the Volstead Act and Bill became a fierce and unrelenting foe of the bootleggers. During this time he was a delegate to the Customs Regulation Conference between the United States and Canada in 1923, and the next year was counsel for the New York State Fuel Commission.

In 1924 President Coolidge reorganized the Department of Justice and called Bill to Washington to be assistant to the Attorney General, and to head the anti-trust division.

It is said that Bill had his heart set on being Attorney General, but that honor did not come to him. When President Hoover took over the White House in 1927 he offered Donovan the Governor Generalship of the Philippines, but Bill turned it down and went into corporation law in New York City. This brought him back to the State and in 1929 he was commissioned counsel to the Committee for the revision of the laws governing New York State's Public Service Commission.

While in Washington he had gained valuable experience practicing

before the Supreme Court of the United States. In 1915 as a corporation attorney he won the important Humphrey case which you will remember held that the President could not arbitrarily remove a chairman of the Federal Trade Commission. This undoubtedly had profound influence on President Roosevelt and may have set in motion the effort to pack the Supreme Court.

He also won an important decision in upholding the right of coal producers to organize a joint selling agency as a measure of economic self-defense--an action which stemmed the tide of some of the more radical New Deal legislative efforts.

During this period of corporate law practice Bill never lost his interest in world affairs. He visited Ethiopia during the Italian invasion of that country and Spain during the Civil War, carefully observing the Axis efforts to test new equipment in these foreign adventures.

When World War II commenced Bill was called into action by President Roosevelt. He was sent on four flying missions to England.

the Balkans and the Middle East. Anthony Eden advised Washington that Colonel Donovan's confidential mission to the Balkans had been most helpful to the British in their assessment of the situation in the area.

But Bill Donovan had something to say about the British upon his return to Washington. You will recall that there was considerable skepticism in this country at that time as to whether the British would or could continue to stand up against the Germans. Donovan reported to Roosevelt that they could and would. He also warned Harry Hopkins orally, and later followed up with a memorandum that the Germans might strike in toward the Suez through French North Africa--a prophecy that was soon to become a reality.

Donovan told the President that the United States should start preparing immediately for a global war. He particularly stressed the need of a service to wage unorthodox warfare and would gather information from every means available. Donovan discussed this idea at length with his close friends in the Cabinet, Haun and Stimson, and with Attorney General Jackson.

The seeds which Bill planted bore fruit. In 1941 the President established the Office of the Coordinator of Information and called Donovan to Washington to head it. The original concept of this organization was that it should combine all information and intelligence programs with psychological and guerrilla warfare. This proved impractical and in 1942 the organization was split with that portion dealing with information activities becoming the Office of War Information, while the intelligence and unorthodox warfare work was put in the Office of Strategic Services.

Truly one of the remarkable accomplishments in World War II was the organization and activities of the O. S. S. - an accomplishment due exclusively to the ability and leadership of Donovan.

Starting from scratch in 1941 Donovan built an organization of tens of thousands that made some vital contributions to the victory of the armed forces. Some of the facts of O. S. S. will have to remain forever secret, but many have become less sensitive with the passage of time and can be discussed.

Will Donovan knew exactly what he wanted his organization to do, and about in his dynamic fashion to build the mechanism.

First, he wanted a worldwide intelligence organization that could collect all of the facts necessary to guide the high command to victory.

He was convinced that the axis secrets were to be found not only in Berlin, Rome and Tokyo, but in all of the neutral capitals and outposts around the world. So he immediately set about dispatching officers to all of the key spots in Europe. The pay-off was tremendous.

Just to mention one area with which I am personally familiar--

Switzerland--we were able to obtain information of great value from carefully established agents in Berlin in the Foreign Office, the High Command, and the Abwehr--the secret intelligence service. As the result of the work of these agents we were able to receive advance information about the development of German jet aircraft, about German work with heavy water in an effort to develop a nuclear weapon, about the V-1s and V-2s -- the "buzz bomb" and rockets with which we attacked England, and about

the plot against Hitler. Some of this information could be acted upon promptly by the military to retard the German war effort--and were--with the commando raid on the heavy water plant, and an air raid on the air experimental center at Peenemunde on the Baltic Coast.

Donovan knew that in addition to the organization for the collection of strategic intelligence there should be a counterpart to help gather tactical information in the combat areas. He/Donovan had organized teams of parachutists--Americans as well as indigenous--to drop behind enemy lines and report on defensive installations and troop movements.

In addition to intelligence, W. D. Hill also wanted action. His idea was that well organized guerrillas operating behind enemy lines in areas where the local population was friendly could track havoc on enemy lines of communication and tie down troops that could otherwise be used in combat. He organized together with our allies teams of leaders and communicators to go behind enemy lines and organize the resistance. There were several

Air drops of supplies and equipment, and in some instances almost regularly scheduled flights went in and brought out couriers. I don't know German lines in France or the Japanese lines in Burma or elsewhere. I should stress here that much of this was done with our allies--particularly the British and French, and their role and contribution should not be underestimated.

This "action" group was well supported in Washington and elsewhere by a technical group which was constantly at work in a very imaginative fashion developing new ways to sabotage the enemy war effort and new gadgets to either harass the opposition or help us. Illustrative of what this unusual part of the organization did was the development of a lotion that could be used as a shark repellent for personnel forced to take to the waters in shark-infested waters. Some of their products weren't quite as practical. For example, the Japanese are known to be very superstitious about foxes. So someone got the bright idea of getting some fox skins, filling them with helium, painting the eyes with phosphorus and then letting the winds float them into Japan. This project never was airborne.

But there were many other ingenious ideas to work on the minds of the enemy born in another part of the O. S. S. - the Morale Branch. This was the undercover psychological warfare branch of the war effort. While the Office of War Information was telling the enemy about the magnitude of the U. S. war effort and getting the facts and figures well circulated, this branch of O. S. S. was dedicated to confusing the enemy and breaking their morale. Here Bill Donovan's vivid imagination came into full play.

The story is told about the day that the presentation unit completed a film on which Donovan wanted the views of his staff. He assembled about 30 of them in the projection room to see a motion picture about the Japanese war effort. The picture started with a graphic portrayal of a hypothetical Japanese soldier named Shimato. He had only part of a rifle because of the shortage of steel, only part of a boot because of leather shortage, and so on. After the 30 minutes of film was completed and the lights went on, Donovan turned to one of his trouble-shooters, a former Vice President of Macy's - John O'Gara, and asked for his views. O'Gara, who was known for his

emphatic comments, leaned forward and said, "General, my heart bleeds for

the poor Jap." General Donovan said, "John, you've got a point. Come

back in 30 days." A month later the same group assembled to see a

re-showing. General Donovan opened the meeting by saying to O'Gara,

"John, we've made some revisions, but I hope you've got a sense of humor."

O'Gara replied that he thought he had. And Donovan said, "That's good,

because you see we've changed the name of the Jap soldier to Ogura."

Another, and very major branch of OGS was that engaged in research and analysis. Donovan had a strong conviction that there were great untapped reservoirs of information in this country about foreign areas of vital interest.

These included aliens, business organizations with foreign interests, and even tourists who had travelled abroad and taken pictures. He knew it was

important not just to collect the raw information, but to analyze it and

present it to the policy makers in usable form. Therefore he assembled

in Washington some of the best analytic brains that he could beg, borrow

and buy. They provided reports on the key areas of Africa, the Middle

14.
General Donovan possessed the qualities of a great intelligence officer. He was insatiably curious. He wanted to see and hear and find out for himself. He drove his staff wild trying to keep him from going to places they thought were dangerous, and he kept them in a state of near exhaustion with his constant travel and 18 to 20 hour days. But like a really top-flight intelligence officer, he was not obsessed with one target, but looking ahead for new threats that might develop. In late 1944 he sent a new man to Cairo to take over the direction of activities from that post and gave him oral instructions to the effect that the main target for intelligence operations should now become discovering what the Soviets were doing in the Balkans rather than German activities in the Middle East. For obvious reasons, General Donovan could not put such instructions in an official dispatch.

While the war was still in progress, General Donovan was looking forward to the peace. He foresaw the need for a permanent organization not only to collect intelligence, but, perhaps even more important, to coordinate the overall intelligence effort of the government and to see that

the President and the policy makers were provided a consolidated view on which to make a decision as to the U. S. course of action.

In the Fall of 1944 Donovan presented to the President a paper proposing a worldwide intelligence organization. This organization would be directly responsible to the President, and while it would not interfere with the responsibilities of the departmental intelligence services, particularly those of the armed forces, it would act as a coordinating mechanism.

Donovan's paper stressed that his proposed organization would have no police or subpoena powers and would not be operating in the United States.

Needless to say, the war had not completely stilled all departmental rivalries and jurisdictional disputes. Secretary of War Stimson commented in his book: "Stimson was insistent that no impatience with its occasional eccentricities should deprive the Army of the profits of cooperation with General Donovan's Office of Strategic Services. Throughout the war the intelligence activities of the United States Government remained basically uncoordinated, but here again it was necessary to measure the profits of

reorganization against its dislocations and on the whole, Simpson felt that the American achievement in this field, measured against the conditions of 1945, was more than satisfactory. A full reorganization belonged to the post war period."

President Roosevelt expressed considerable interest in General Donovan's proposal. In fact, just a week before his death in April 1945 the President asked Donovan to poll the Cabinet and heads of the appropriate agencies to comment on the proposals. The replies make interesting reading today and range all the way from those who felt that such a peacetime organization was vital to national security to those who saw no need.

While Donovan received an Oak Leaf Cluster to his Distinguished Service Medal for his work with the O. S. S., he was not to realize his ambition to see the O. S. S. evolve into a peacetime intelligence organization immediately upon the cessation of hostilities. His plan was beset with conflicting views: one group would have the organization reporting to the Joint Chiefs of Staff--as did O. S. S. during the war--while another would

was preferred it to be under the Department of State. And there was controversy as to whether one individual could or should be responsible for presenting a consolidated view of the intelligence organizations to the policy makers, or whether this should be the collective responsibility of the chiefs of all the intelligence services.

In any event the war ended in August 1945. The O. S. S. was ordered disbanded by the Bureau of the Budget in September. A proposal for a central intelligence organization was contained in the first draft of the so-called unification act submitted by Ferdinand Eberstadt in October 1945. And in January 1946 President Truman issued the order creating the Central Intelligence Group which picked up some of the activities and personnel still remaining from O. S. S.

Bill Donovan's dream was still not completely realized. The matter was now taken up by the Congress, and after extensive hearings at which General Donovan was a prominent witness, the provisions for a Central Intelligence Agency were incorporated into the National Security Act of 1947.

This act established the organization for national security that now exists in Washington, creating five major governmental entities: The National Security Council, the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency. Thus in July 1947 was legislative endorsement finally given to the views which Donovan had been striving to have accepted.

while Bill Donovan's restless energy had turned elsewhere with the disbanding of O. S. S., he never gave up his interest in the organization or stopped hammering home to the public the necessity for providing adequate and accurate information to the policy makers of the government in order to protect the national security. Typical of his continued interest was the address he delivered to the High School Forum of the New York Herald Tribune in April 1946, entitled "A Central Intelligence Agency: Foreign Policy Must Be Based on Facts." In this he told of the work of O. S. S. and stressed the need for a peacetime service.

Donovan's varied talents were being called on for other important services. His legal ability and vast knowledge of German wartime activities were needed in helping to prepare the Nuremberg trials for the Nazi war criminals. In 1945 he also was a member of a commission to survey veterans' pensions, and although he had been one of the founders of the American Legion after World War I, General Donovan wisely maintained that excessive generosity with pensions could lead to a tremendous drain on the public Treasury and have other unfavorable consequences.

The following year he made his last bid for public office when he sought the nomination of the Republican Party for the United States Senate. But while frustrated in his aspirations for public office, he kept an active eye on world events and threats to the national security. He went to Greece to investigate the murder of newsmen George Polk, in a suspected effort of the Communists to prevent the truth from seeping out about the extent of their activities in the Greek civil war. He wrote an article for the May 1948 "Atlantic" under the heading "Stop Russia's Subversive War" in which he said:

"Our defense is dependant on the belief of other countries that we, as a people, have a vitality of body and spirit upon which they can draw." As if to emphasize his words, Donovan went to Berlin during the air lift, following his lifetime practice of seeing for himself.

The more General Donovan saw of the Soviets in action the more concerned he was with alerting the American people to the dangers and with being in the "front line" in the war against Communism. In the Yale Law Journal for July 1949 he was co-author of an article presenting a "Program for a Democratic Counter Attack to Communist Penetration of Government Service." The article said: "The Communist Fifth Column... seeks to identify itself with every social grievance. Russian espionage and subversive operations are made up of trained and skilled spy technicians and intelligence officers, propaganda specialists, experts in spreading rumors.

"Instruction is planned so that the agent will find it as easy for a minority to operate a labor union, or a pacifist league, or any other such

Donovan was soon to enter the fight against the Communists. The President named this remarkable man to be United States Ambassador to Thailand. At the time this position of honor was a main target for Communist subversion. It was a year that belied his years. Bill Donovan threw himself into assisting the Thais in bolstering their defense against the Communists so that this key stone of the anti-Communist defense of Asia could continue free.

Upon his return to the United States one might have expected this man to seek retirement, but nothing could have been further from his mind. He became National Chairman of the International Refugee Committee and the director of that group's fight against the Soviet program to induce Russians who escaped from Communism to return home. At the time of the Hungarian Revolution he threw his energies into aiding the refugees who were forced to flee after their unsuccessful effort to win freedom from Soviet tyranny.

Even after ill health forced General Donovan to retire to Walter

agement, as it is for a minority group to control a large corporation. Most of the stockholders take no active interest in the management.

In 1950 in an address on the occasion of his being presented with the Alexander Hamilton award by Columbia University, General Danoyan reported on his recent trip to Asia: "In Asia it is completely appreciated that the Russians have declared a subversive war on the rest of non-Communist Asia and ourselves. I wonder if the significance of that choosing up of sides has really come home to us here in the United States." He described the strategic relationship of the various areas of Southeast Asia and commented: "Indonesia is the most important of the Southeast Asian countries that have emerged from colonial status into nationhood." Continuing, he noted the efforts of that country to establish self-government and said: "There is general agreement among those whose opinion should be given weight that Russia has a program in Southeast Asia and that the timetable for their program has been stepped up..."

Reed Hospital in Washington, he continued to take an active interest in the

fight against tyranny and in the intelligence effort of the government. In

recognition of Donovan's role in the intelligence field, President Eisenhower

in 1957 awarded him the National Security Medal. The citation reads:

"Through his foresight, wisdom, and experience, he foresaw, during the

course of World War II, the problems which would face the postwar world

and the urgent need for a permanent, centralized intelligence function. Thus

his wartime work contributed to the establishment of the Central Intelligence

Agency and a coordinated national intelligence structure."

His dream of years had been achieved. In February 1959 "Wild Bill"

Donovan passed away at Walter Reed hospital among the men he had lead.

As soldier, public prosecutor, leader of the bar, Director of the Strategic

Services in wartime, and candidate for public office, he had left his record

with the nation he served so well. He was a rare combination of physical

courage, intellectual ability, and political acumen. He was a mild-mannered

man, with an insatiable curiosity, an unflagging imagination, and the energy
to turn his ideas into results

The Heritage of Bill Donovan is written in the national security.

He awoke the American people to the need of a permanent peacetime intelligence service. He bestirred Washington into creating a mechanism whereby all of the components of the government which receive information on what is going on anywhere in the world pool their knowledge, share their interpretations, and work together to make one unified estimate of what it means.

He helped place intelligence in its proper perspective and stimulated the policy makers to recognize its role in deciding on the proper American action abroad. He was one of the architects of an organization that should help keep our government the best informed of any in the world.

History's epitaph for William J. Donovan of Buffalo, New York,

will be: He made his nation more secure.
